

# **Shame management and recidivism in school bullying**

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Empirical Findings and Theory Developments in Restorative Justice: Where Are  
We Now? 23-25 February, 2005

## **What is bullying?**

- is a repetitive aggressive act, either physical or non-physical
- expresses the domination of the powerful over the powerless
- is done without provocation

## **What has been ignored in past research on bullying?**

- A focus on emotions such as shame / guilt
- A restorative justice perspective
- A longitudinal paradigm
- A lack of studies on bully/victims

## **What does shame literature tell us?**

- Shame deters crime
- Shame is the master emotion
- Shame, if acknowledged, serves adaptive functions
- Shame, if unacknowledged, serves non-adaptive functions

Source: Braithwaite, 1989; Lewis, 1971; Nathanson, 1992;  
Retzinger, 1991; Scheff, 1987

**Table 1. Adaptive and non-adaptive dimensions of shame management**

<b>Shame acknowledgment</b>		<b>Adaptive</b>	<b>Non-adaptive</b>
1.	Admitting shame feelings	√	<b>X</b>
2.	Taking responsibility	√	<b>X</b>
3.	Making amends	√	<b>X</b>
<b>Internalizing shame</b>			
4.	Feeling others' rejection	<b>X</b>	√
<b>Shame displacement</b>			
5.	Blaming others	<b>X</b>	√
6.	Wanting to have retaliation	<b>X</b>	√
7.	Hitting out at something else	<b>X</b>	√

## **Hypotheses**

### **Hypothesis 1:**

Bullies will show **lower** scores on shame acknowledgment but **higher** scores on shame displacement

### **Hypothesis 2:**

Non-bully/non-victims will show **higher** scores on shame acknowledgment but **lower** scores on shame displacement

## **Hypotheses (cont'd)**

### **Hypothesis 3:**

Victims will show **higher** scores on internalizing shame, and **lower** scores on shame displacement

### **Hypothesis 4:**

Bully/victims will score **higher** on internalizing shame like victims, and on shame displacement like bullies

## Sample (1996)

- 32 schools in the Australian Capital Territory
- Public and private
- Co-educational
- 1,401 students (and their parents;  $n = 978$ )
- Mean age of students = 10.87 years
- Girls = 54%



# Instruments

- Management Of Shame State – Shame Acknowledgment and Shame Displacement (MOSS-SASD)
- Bullying questions:
  - How often have you been a part of a group that bullied someone during the last year?
  - How often have you, on your own, bullied someone during the last year?
  - Why did you bully?
- Victim questions:
  - how often (in the last year) have you been bullied by another student or group of students?
  - Why do you think you were bullied?



**Table 2.**

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**Grouping children according to their bullying involvements**

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Non-bully/non-victims -	neither bullied nor were victimized
Victims -	had been victimized but had never bullied
Bullies -	had bullied but never been victimized
Bully/victims -	both bullied and were victimized

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**Table 3. Percentages of children involved / non-involved in bullying/victimization**

	<u>No Bullying</u>	<u>Bullying</u>
<u>No Victimization</u>	Non-bully / Non-victims n = 211 (15%)	Bullies n = 179 (13%)
<u>Victimization</u>	Victims n = 293 (21%)	Bully / Victims n = 156 (11%)

**Table 4. Findings in relation to shame management dimensions for four groups of children**

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>NB/NV</b>	<b>VICTIM</b>	<b>BULLY</b>	<b>B/V</b>	<b>F (3, 838)</b>
<b>Feeling shame</b>	✓	✓	X	✓	<b>12.01***</b>
<b>Taking responsibility</b>	✓	✓	X	X	<b>7.08***</b>
<b>Making amends</b>	✓	✓	X	X	<b>7.11***</b>
<b>Internalizing shame</b>	X	✓	X	✓	<b>15.05***</b>
<b>Blaming others</b>	X	X	✓	✓	<b>4.89***</b>
<b>Retaliatory anger</b>	X	X	✓	✓	<b>12.37***</b>
<b>Displaced anger</b>	X	X	✓	✓	<b>7.36***</b>

**Table 5. Summary results for bullying status and shame management**

Bullying Status	Shame Management Skills	Consequences
Non-bully / non-victims (15%)	ACKNOWLEDGE SHAME  RESIST SHAME DISPLACEMENT	Shame <u>IS</u> discharged
Victims (21%)	ACKNOWLEDGE SHAME  INTERNALIZE SHAME	Shame <u>IS NOT</u> discharged

**Table 5. Summary results for bullying status and shame management (cont'd)**

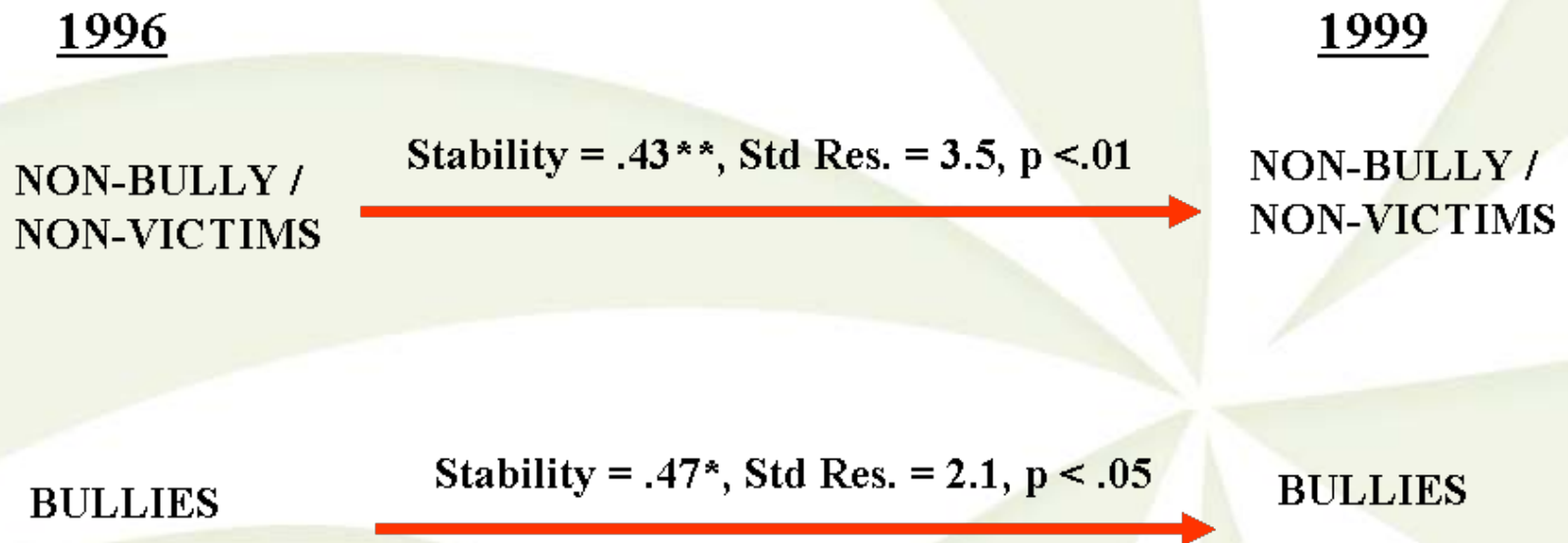
Bullying Status	Shame Management Skills	Consequences
Bullies (13%)	RESIST SHAME ACKNOWLEDGMENT	Shame <u>IS NOT</u> discharged
	DISPLACE SHAME	
Bully/victims (11%)	RESIST SHAME ACKNOWLEDGMENT	Shame <u>IS NOT</u> discharged
	INTERNALIZE SHAME	
	DISPLACE SHAME	

**Table 6 . Follow-up sample (1999) and attrition rate**

Parents participated in 1996	n = 978
Agreed to participate in the follow-up	n = 581 (59.40%)
Response rate in the follow-up (1999)	n = 368 (63.30%)
Attrition rate	36.70%

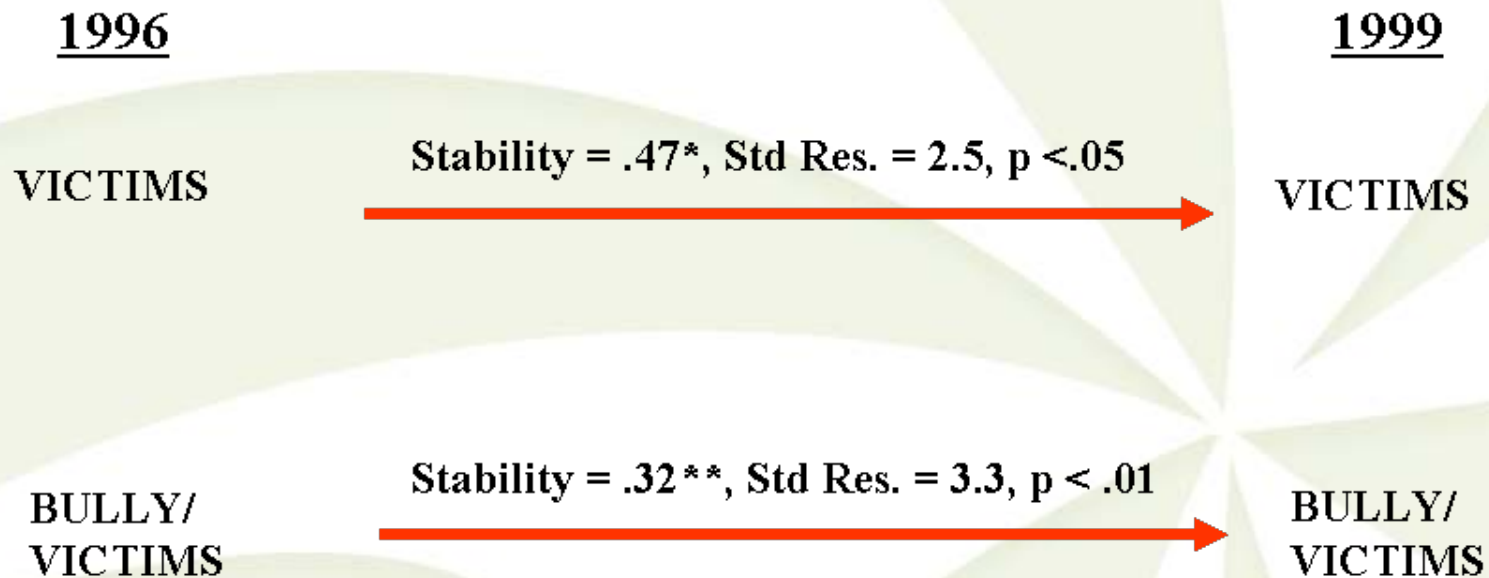
**Q. How stable is a child's bullying status across time?**

## Stability of children's bullying status between 1996 and 1999





## Stability of children's bullying status between 1996 and 1999 (cont'd)



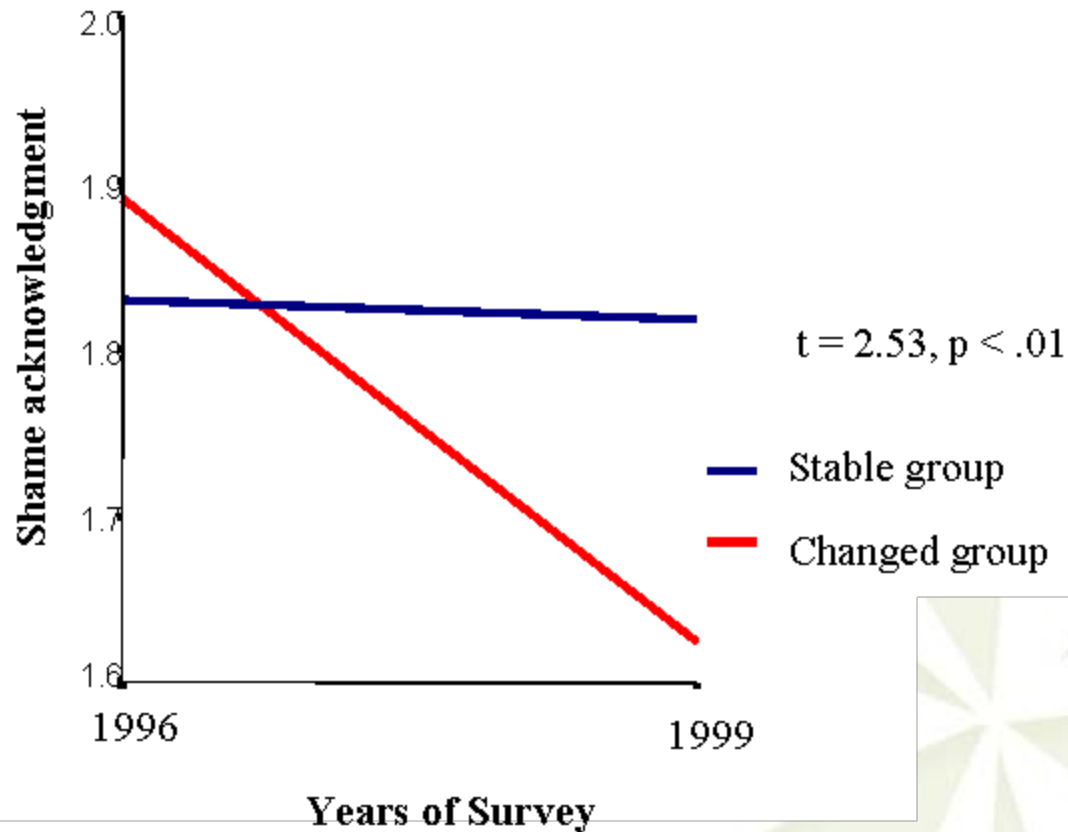


Figure 1. A comparison of Shame Acknowledgment scores (1996 and 1999) between “stable non-bully / non-victims” and those who moved to the bullying group

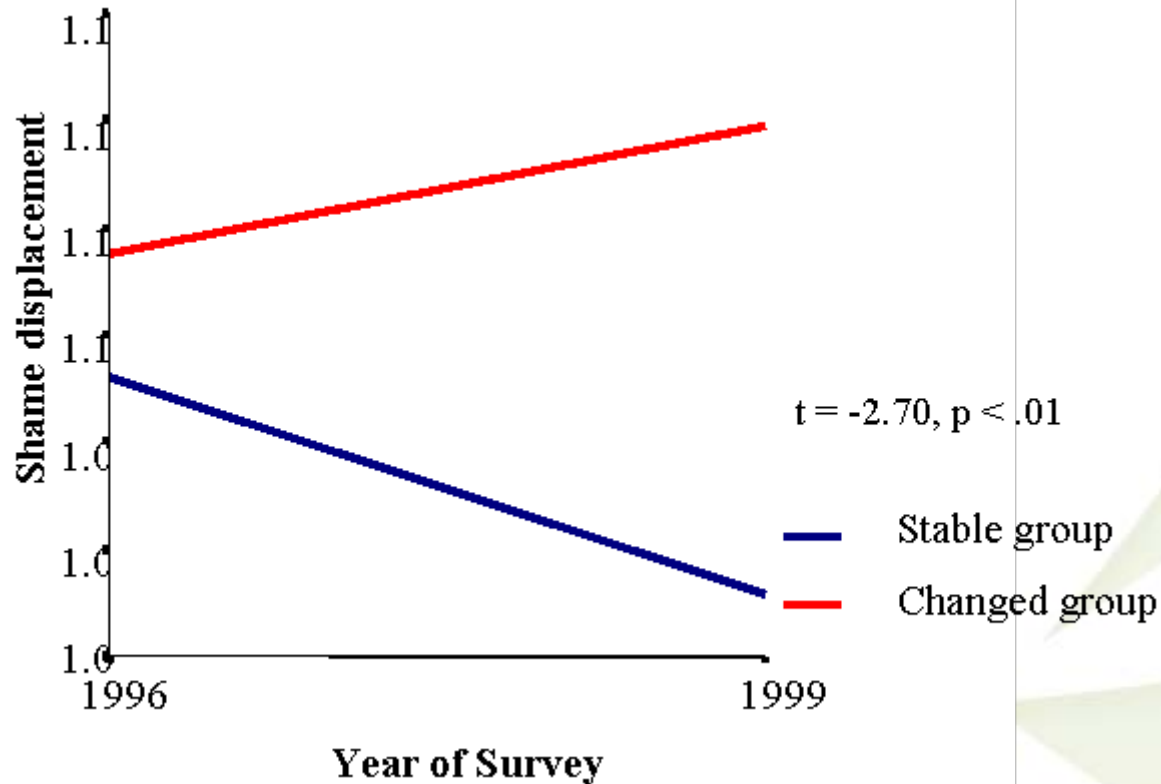


Figure 2. A comparison of Shame displacement scores (1996 and 1999) between “stable non-bully / non-victims” and those who moved to the bullying group

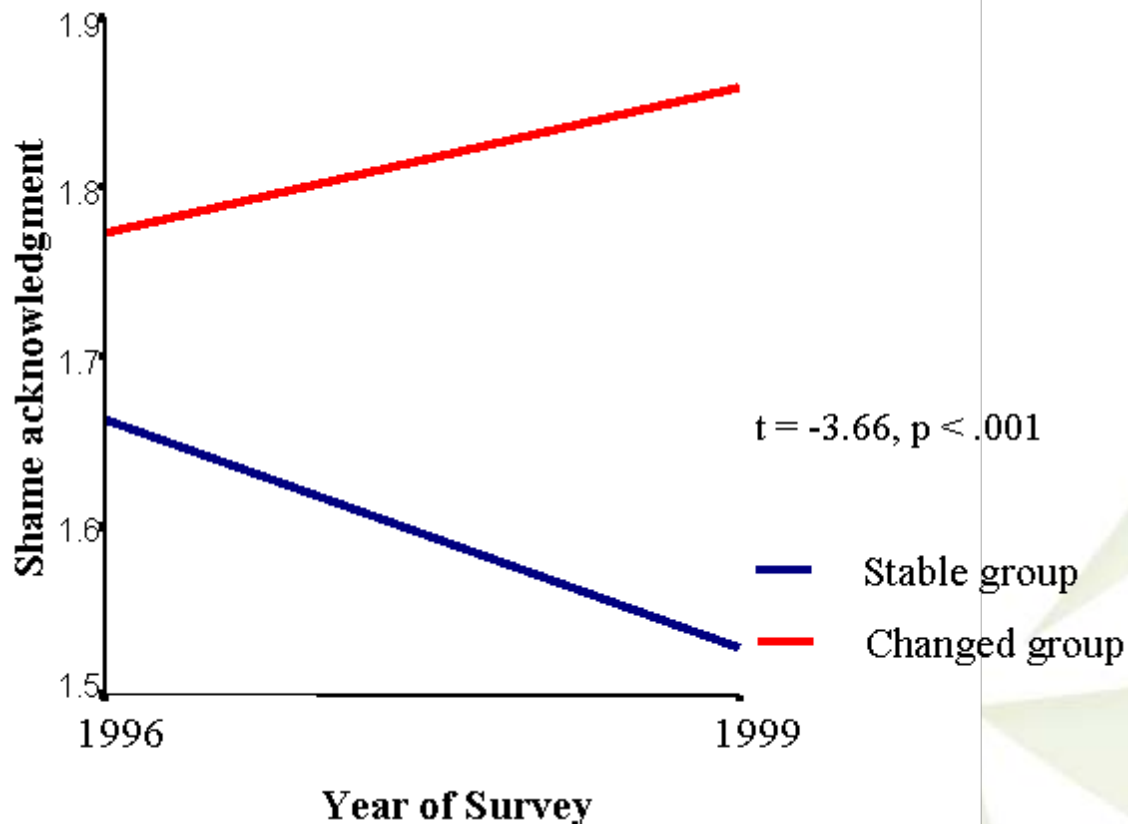


Figure 3. A comparison of Shame acknowledgment scores (1996 and 1999) between “stable bullies” and those who moved to the non-bully / non-victim group

## **Summary findings**

- Bullying and victimization are moderately stable
- Non-bully / non-victims are the most socially and emotionally competent children because of their adaptive shame management –
  - High shame acknowledgment
  - Low shame displacement
- Adaptive shame management skills deter recidivism in bullying

## **Where to from here?**

- Early recognition of the bullying problem
- Early intervention strategies within a whole-of-school approach –
  - a respectful caring school environment
  - coaching adaptive shame management, such as high shame acknowledgment with low shame displacement
- Empowering bystanders to intervene